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ABSTRACT

The investigation in this study of inner-city elementary schools identified two main causes for successful learning environments. The strongest influence was thought to be the principal. An analysis of "problem oriented schools" showed that successful principals were prone to act independently of bureaucratic directives, and that they heeded teacher advice and attended to their needs; while the unsuccessful principals were more rigid and hierarchy oriented. The way that schools grouped students for academic work also appeared to be a factor. Schools which had grades K-6 had fewer discipline problems than those with K-8. This finding was attributed to the difficulty of disciplining junior high students and the influence of these more defiant seventh and eighth graders on younger students. Furthermore, teachers favored the self-contained classroom over the departmental system, since having one group of students enhanced both the teacher's disciplinary success and the warmth and mutual respect between teacher and student. Recommendations made in this study were: the hiring of principals with administrative skills necessary for running inner-city schools; elimination or minimization of formal written and oral qualifying examinations and of irrelevant credential requirements for picking administrators; and, pre-service and in-service training programs for administrators. (KG)

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VARIATIONS AMONG INNER CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

An Investigation into the Nature and Causes of Their Differences

by

RUSSELL C. DOLL

Preface and Commentary by Daniel U. Levine

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Preface

Researchers generally must be satisfied with learning somewhat less about the problems they investigate than they hope to find out when they initiate a study. Occasionally, however, a researcher is pleasantly surprised to find that his study sheds even more light on a problem than he might have anticipated when he set out to define his objectives and construct his research design.

This is precisely what happened to Russel C. Doll, Assistant Professor of Education and Staff Associate at the Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems in Education, University of Missouri — Kansas City. While a graduate student in education at the University of Chicago, Mr. Doll set out to find a reliable method for identifying and classifying the differing types of elementary schools which exist within a big city school district. The value of working out a method for doing this seemed obvious: not only would such a method help increase understanding of the situations and problems which differentiate one big city elementary school from another, but a procedure for differentiating between elementary schools in the same type of neighborhood also might be a useful aid in determining why one occasionally encounters schools which appear to stand out — for better or for worse — from their neighboring schools.

In carrying out this project, Mr. Doll soon found that while in the process of constructing a reliable classification of differing types of schools, he was learning a good deal about the possible forces which made schools serving generally-similar pupil populations different from one another. That is, the initial goal of constructing and validating an instrument to classify big city elementary schools overlapped with the subsequent or ultimate goal of utilizing such an instrument to increase our understanding of the variables which may be responsible for the fact that some schools appear to function better or worse than one would expect given a variety of descriptive data about their students and neighborhoods.

Moreover, Mr. Doll soon perceived that his experience and findings in conducting the study bore directly on one of the foremost problems in metropolitan education, if not in contemporary United States society: namely, the problem of providing more adequate learning environments for economically disadvantaged students in schools in low-income neighborhoods of the big city. As he travelled to and observed schools in predominantly low-income areas, he found that a few stood out in appearing to be functioning even more poorly than is typically the case in such schools, and an even smaller number appeared to be functioning more satisfactorily than observers have learned to expect in visiting low-income schools. When his data confirmed that the latter indeed did fall into a different category from most other low-income schools on his instrument for classifying elementary schools independently of the economic background of

their students and neighborhoods, he returned to the low-income schools in his sample in order to learn more about what was happening there.

It is true that the conclusions he drew in talking to teachers and observing the situation in well-functioning, average-functioning, and poorly-functioning low-income schools serving disadvantaged pupil populations are based on non-quantified interview results, on impressionistic observations, and on subjective insights rather than on the "hard" type of data he used in constructing and validating his questionnaire for classifying schools. Nevertheless, the findings and implications drawn from later, more serendipitous parts of his project are too important and significant for persons concerned with improving the education of disadvantaged students to be left buried in a researcher's memoirs because they have not been established or verified as fully as could be accomplished in a well-designed series of follow-up studies. If funds were available to plan and conduct such studies, these conclusions might be crystallized in a more systematic manner which also would reveal still more about the factors which differentiate between relatively "successful" and "unsuccessful" low-income schools. Meanwhile, this report is being published and brought to the attention of the educational profession in the belief that it may be a useful contribution to the thinking and efforts of educators and laymen who are determined to improve the quality of education available to economically disadvantaged youngsters in the big cities.

Daniel U. Levine, Director
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VARIATIONS AMONG INNER CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Russell C. Doll

INTRODUCTION

It had rained the morning the investigator first visited the Agnes DeMille school, a two story structure, less than ten years old, situated in a very low-income area of the city. The early rain had washed clean the yellow brick, bright now in the light of a blue, clearing day. Young evenly spaced trees stretched skyward in the springtime sun, their promise of shade from summer's heat yet to be fulfilled.

Inside the school, the corridors and walls were a bright pastel, textured fire brick, the colors an attractive contrast with the white and green linoleum. The halls and classrooms stood bathed in fluorescence, neutralizing sunlight competing vainly with the artificial brightness.

In a classroom recently vacated by the teachers and students, the disorder of the movable type desks suggested flight rather than orderly dismissal. The shining yellowish-brown tops of the desks bore markings and carvings. Light green chalk boards, pale with white dust, carried hastily-scribbled messages addressed to other members of the class. Books and other equipment were in random profusion throughout the room, with no hint of organization to the disorder. Wadded paper lay by the legs of the scattered desks. Inside the storage cabinets could be found expensive new science equipment recently purchased through Title I funds.

It did not take long to discover that other classrooms resembled the one just visited. The condition of the rooms was a reflection of a general chaos that existed in the school. Despite the relative newness of the building and its excellent equipment, a lack of spirit pervaded its halls and classrooms.

Teachers went disheartened through the motions of teaching while the students refused the charade. Uneasy classroom truces were broken by teachers and students shouting at each other, or else silence, born of sullen disrespect, haunted the academic no-man's-land which stretched from the first line of students' desks to the front of the teacher's desk. The faint whirr and click of an electric clock marked the passage of each wasted "busy work" minute.

Many students roamed the halls at will. Tests of strength on this matter long ago had been lost by the teachers. The victor students used the time to visit their friends' rooms, peering through door windows at what passed for scholars' work.

Some teachers tried to set up a climate for teaching in the classroom, tried to maintain order in the classrooms and halls and on the playgrounds. With almost Herculean effort, some were successful — but only within the confines of their own classrooms. They could bring life back to plaster-cast faces, cracking through the hard apathy. But the total atmosphere of the school eventually took its toll. After a time, disheartened and disillusioned by the devastating effect of the school situation on students with whom they had felt some success, many teachers were ready to give up the fight and leave, following others who had already fled.

It was a school in turmoil. The faculty served their time, existing until they could find another teaching position. There was little faculty cohesion, little esprit-de-corps. Each teacher, threatened by his own overwhelming problems, worked alone. And the children suffered.

The investigator visited the school three more times, holding long interviews with teachers, observing in halls and on the playground, talking briefly with the students and interviewing and observing the principal. Each time the investigator approached the attractive building hoping to find that the overwhelming sense of futility, discouragement, and despair would not be there, hoping that somehow the skills of the teacher and the new equipment and supplies were being mobilized for the good of the children. But each time the situation was the same as it had been the time before.

Less than three-quarters of a mile from the DeMille School, in the same low-income area of the city and attended by the same type of children, stands the Benedict Arnold school. Built near the turn of the century, fortress-like, rising a tall three stories, it appears anchored in the surrounding concrete and asphalt. Not a blade of grass softens the approaches, not a tree relieves the hardness of its lines. The once maroon-colored brick is encrusted with more than six decades of city grime, giving the surface a blackened, almost charred, appearance. Narrow, tall windows are spaced evenly between expanses of brick, evidence of an architecture long vanished. It stands ominous and depressing, the city's din swirling around it.

The investigator entered through a green sheet-metal covered door. Inside, the walls were painted an institutional green, the ceilings high and white. Clean, wooden floors were worn smooth by generations of children's shoes and the conscientious care of the custodians.

Pebbly concrete steps, lined with green metal banisters, rose at the end of the long cavern-like corridors. Slim lines of fluorescent ceiling lights were incongruous with the architecture of another generation.

In the classrooms, students, some quietly, some busily, were engaged in activities in an open, friendly, but businesslike arrangement with the teacher. For the most part the teachers seemed to be teaching in a situation of mutual acceptance, if not even respect. Children in the halls moved with purpose and ignored the opportunity to gaze into other rooms and attract the attention of their friends. Dismissal lines were orderly, with little hostility seen between teachers and students. Teachers laughed and joked with the students, correcting when necessary, but in a manner suggesting a mutual acceptance of the situation. The relationship between teachers and students seemed to be good.

The faculty was cohesive and had a positive group identity. They planned together and reinforced each other when anyone became discouraged. Children with problems, both emotional and academic, were seen by most of the teachers as children who needed help. These students were not viewed in a defensive, hostile manner, or seen as children to exclude.

Problems existed in the school. Children were still below the city median in achievement. Fights occurred. Teachers sometimes became discouraged. Children were sometimes openly hostile to the teacher. But the situation was not seen by the teachers as being one from which to flee. There was little faculty turn-over, and good feelings existed toward the students and the community. Teachers admitted to a difficult, but not impossible, situation and felt they could teach once they gained order in the classroom and won the respect of the children and parents. It was not a school in chaos. It was a school functioning much better than others which surrounded it (such as the Agnes DeMille School).

Two schools, both located in the same area of the city and both drawing the same kind of student population, yet two schools having very different situations. One, the Agnes DeMille, is a chaotic school in which students are uncontrolled. Teachers feel that they cannot teach because they must concentrate on keeping order. Discouraged and disheartened, they leave the school as soon as they can. The other, the Benedict Arnold, has problems, but not overwhelming ones. The students and teachers have a good relationship and instruction and learning are taking place. Control of student behavior is still needed but is not dysfunctional to the learning objectives of the school. The teachers have a feeling of esprit-de-corps, and cohesiveness as a group. They do not readily transfer from the school.

In the study which is described in the next section of this pamphlet, it was found that four "types" of school can be identified in the big city. These four are:

Highly academic-oriented schools (HAO)
Average academically-oriented schools (AAO)
Partially problem-oriented schools (PPO)
Highly problem-oriented schools (HPO)

Many of the schools in the low-income areas of the big city are of the fourth type, the highly problem-oriented school (HPO). Schools in this classification are those in which teachers experience a feeling of defeat arising from a complex of causes and in which control of student behavior frequently is seen as an end in itself rather than a means to an end.

The DeMille School fits this characterization of the HPO school. Its teachers feel even more frustrated and its students are even more "out of control" than is true in most other HPO schools. To the extent that the DeMille School deviates from other schools of the same general type, it is even more problem-oriented than the "average" HPO school in a low-income area.

Not all schools in low-income areas, however, are HPO schools. Occasionally one finds a low-income school which enrolls the same kind of student population as the DeMille School but one in which teachers do not appear to feel overwhelmingly frustrated or to be almost exclusively concerned with problems of student control. This is the partially problem-oriented (PPO) type of school. Problems of student behavior are still obvious, but there is mutual, if grudging, respect between student and teacher, and efforts devoted to controlling student behavior are viewed as a prelude to teaching and not as an end in themselves. The Arnold School is this type of school.

Both the DeMille School and the Arnold School deviated from the situation most commonly found in low-income areas, the DeMille in the direction of absolute chaos and the Arnold in the direction of a more productive learning situation.

The purpose of this report is to identify possible reasons why some schools in low-income areas deviate from the school situation typically found in the majority of schools in such areas. Before attempting to do so, however, a brief summary of the study which provided the basis for these speculations is given in the next section of the report.

THE INITIAL STUDY:
PROCEDURES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF SCHOOL SITUATIONS

The primary purpose of the study was to identify the major types of elementary schools which can be found in a "big city."[1] There has been a tendency to categorize elementary schools in big cities into only two types: those that are "difficult" and those that are "not difficult." To determine whether schools could be grouped into other than "difficult" and "not difficult" categories, it was decided to look at the situation existing inside the school, as this situation was described by teachers and principals. It was thought that their descriptive statements of the school situation would allow the investigator not only to differentiate "difficult" from "not difficult" school situations but also to identify intermediate situations.

Initially, 70 schools were selected as being "difficult" or "not difficult." This assessment was based on answers to interview questions involving various aspects of the school situation. Questions were asked of teachers and principals with regard to the following:

1. How was classroom time being utilized (teaching vs. discipline)?
2. Was the curriculum appropriate for the children?
3. What was the general behavior of their children?
4. To what degree did the parents support the school?
5. Did teachers feel they were mainly teaching or controlling behavior?
6. Would the teachers remain in the school?

The investigator, at this point, was primarily concerned with getting a "feel" for the school by asking these general questions and encouraging the teachers to elaborate on their answers.

Schools were selected for visitation and further study through a referral process which worked as follows: at the end of an "interview," the informant was shown a map giving the location of schools in the city and was asked to choose those he thought had situations "similar to" or "different from" his own, to tell how these other situations differed, and to explain to what degree they differed. The investigator spoke to at least five teachers in each of the schools.

The investigator then chose 40 of the 70 schools for more intensive investigation. These 40 were chosen as follows:

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[1] The study was conducted in Chicago.

The investigator re-examined the information regarding the 70 schools, noting those schools which appeared to be "difficult" and "not difficult." A school was judged to be "difficult" if at least three of the five teachers interviewed had stated they (1) had difficulty in using curriculum and texts as planned, (2) had difficulty in maintaining control in the classroom and halls, and (3) were not sure they were going to remain in the school. A school was judged to be "not difficult" if at least three of the five teachers stated they (1) had little or no difficulty using curriculum and texts as planned, (2) had little or no difficulty maintaining control of the students' behavior, and (3) were fairly certain they would remain in the school. Thirty schools of the 70 fell neither in the "difficult" nor "not difficult" category. The investigator returned to the 40 schools for in-depth interviews and for observations of the school situation.

The informants were chosen from a faculty list provided by the principal on the day of the visit. The teachers in the K-8 schools were selected from grades 5-8 (except in seven cases where the teachers came from below the 5th grade). An attempt was made to secure a sample of teachers with differing years of experience and some experience in other schools. In all, 208 teachers were interviewed. Interview questions concerned the following aspects of school life: (1) The use of curriculum guides and supplements, (2) the classroom functioning of the teacher; (3) the most serious problems the teacher had in the classroom; (4) the type of cooperation the teacher received from the community; and (5) the background of the pupils. The teacher was encouraged to elaborate and illustrate his answers and was encouraged to make additional comments relevant to the school situation.

It was seen from these data and from observations that certain aspects of school life were more potent than others in influencing the school situations. All such aspects of the school situation were designated as "Areas" of school life.

Ten Areas were selected by the investigator as being most influential in the school. These ten Areas are as follows:

1. Curriculum and texts
2. Non-academic duties
3. Teaching role
4. Teaching emphasis
5. Student hostility
6. Parental support and cooperation
7. Respect for teacher
8. "Cultural" experiences
9. Sources of student values
10. Climate of school

The investigator's characterizations of the schools were clinical in nature. However, the observations and analysis of interview data were handled within a framework of the ten Areas mentioned above. Statements of teachers and principals were compared on both an intra- and inter-school basis for each of the ten Areas. Based on these comparisons four types of schools were identified and given the descriptive titles seen above.

However, it also became clear that each Area could be identified at four levels and a check list was constructed which contained descriptive statements which were representative of those which teachers in one or another type of school made to the investigator's query regarding each Area. The construction of such a check list was necessary so that the investigator could see whether teachers could place their schools into the same category, or type, as did the investigator.

The check list was constructed in the following manner. Representative descriptive statements were constructed from teachers' responses to questions relating to the ten Areas. The descriptive statements were arranged vertically by "type" of school situation.

The check list was used to check the agreement between the investigator and the teachers in regard to the placement of the teachers' schools into one or another category. In a general comparison and in a comparison utilizing different statistical techniques, it was found that teachers identified their schools as being in the same category as had the investigator. Another comparison was made using these data to see whether teachers in schools only one step from each other on the check list had distinguished differences between their own situation and situations one step from their own.[2] It was found that teachers could make these distinctions between school situations.

Based on the interview data, the observations, the frequency of agreement between the investigator and teachers' responses to the check list's descriptive statements, general conclusions can be drawn regarding the situations existing in the different types of schools.

Highly Academic Oriented Schools

From a teacher's viewpoint the HAO schools have the most desirable characteristics of any of the four types of schools. The children in the HAO school are very well prepared for what the school demands, and parents are willing and able to supply equipment over and above what is usually needed. Parents take an active

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[2]Teachers were not specifically requested to identify their situation from the situation one step removed from their own.

part in school life. The children have high achievement scores and cause only a small number of discipline problems and, in the majority of cases, no serious discipline problems at all. Emotionally disturbed children are few and for the most part can be dealt with in the school setting. The behavior of the emotionally disturbed child is seldom physically or emotionally threatening to the teacher. A typical statement in these types of schools is "We're so conscious of the gifted here. We've based our whole course of study on the gifted. It is the same with the curriculum guides. As for discipline problems, well, they are practically non-existent."

Average Academically Oriented Schools

AAO type schools are ones which have a majority of academically oriented children, but they also have a greater number of discipline problems and parental problems than have the HAO type schools. However, these problems are not severe enough to interfere with the academic program. The AAO type school is one in which some children may have as rich a background of experiences as the children in the HAO type school, but the majority of the children lacking this rich background still have had many experiences in the wider society which prepare them adequately for what the teachers have to offer.

The AAO school has a minority of children with poor reading scores and below-average school achievement. Although there are more discipline problems in the AAO than in the HAO type schools, the majority of them can be handled between the teacher, the parent, and the principal.

The AAO school is psychologically in the city, whereas the HAO type school most nearly approximates the stereotype of the prestige "suburban" middle-class school. A typical statement from a teacher in an AAO type school is, "This is just a nice typical school situation with nice, typical kids."

Partially Problem Oriented Schools

Many of the PPO type schools have a great diversity in student achievement and behavior and in degree of parental cooperation. The children's home backgrounds are very diverse. Some have stable homes which offer good preparation for school success; some homes provide very limited experiences for success and other children come from homes in which they have few or no experiences which prepare them for success in school. There are also differences among schools in the appropriateness of the curriculum and texts.

The student population tends to be less academically oriented, more independent when dealing with the school and the teachers, and less inclined to identify with the school and its personnel than children in the AAO type schools. The mass media seem to set the dress and

behavioral pattern for many of the students.

Parents, for the most part, desire and verbally emphasize the importance of education for their children and push verbally in this direction but are not quite certain what educational goals should be achieved, nor how one goes about achieving them. Being good in school behaviorally is equated with doing good in school academically.

The PPO school may or may not be close to the center of the city geographically but it is definitely city-oriented. It usually has a large percentage of second-generation foreign-born, or Spanish-speaking and/or Negro students. These schools are usually found between AAO and Highly Problem-Oriented (HPO) type schools and form a kind of buffer zone. There is greater diversity in achievement and kinds of behavior among the student body than in the HAO, AAO and HPO schools. One finds children who are far behind academically and/or who are severe discipline problems. Some PPO-type schools bear a resemblance to AAO-type schools in regard to parental cooperation and children's behavior, while other PPO-type schools bear a resemblance to HPO-type schools in this characteristic.

Nevertheless, there are crucial differences between the PPO and either the AAO or HPO schools. Contrasting the AAO and PPO schools, one finds the majority of the children in PPO type schools lack experiences necessary for success in existing school programs whereas the great majority of children in the AAO schools have experiences outside the school which give them skills to function well in an academic environment and thus increase the potential for teacher rewards. However, frequently children in PPO schools lack knowledge of what is needed for success in academic work and are not sophisticated or wise in the knowledge of how to "cope" with school expectations, both formal and informal.

On the other hand, the potential for the teachers' success is greater in the PPO school classroom than in the HPO school. The children in PPO schools are more able and willing to relate to what the school offers once contact is made. They seem to be able to adapt more readily to the demands of the schools than do the children in the HPO schools. The typical statement of a teacher in a PPO school is, "They sure play rough, and they can get rough in fights, but they're not bad kids when you really get to know them."

Highly Problem Oriented Schools

The HPO type schools face the gravest problems and challences of any schools in the study. For these schools the problems are rooted mainly in the sub-cultures beyond the reach of many agencies organized specifically to deal with these sub-cultures. The HAO-type, most AAO-type, and many PPO-type schools can better control

and handle these problems because their sub-societies are essentially in agreement with the aims of the schools, and because the total number of children alienated from the aims of the schools is not as great as in the HPO schools. The HPO-type schools seem to be overwhelmed by the social problems and behavioral deviation of many of their students. Discipline problems, overt and covert hostility toward the teachers, lack of self-control, lack of experiences and background needed for success in school, participation in an outer society which hardens, alienates, and produces apathy, all these problems produce in many schools an unrewarding and impossible teaching climate. This climate in turn produces pessimism, and in many cases, fear on the part of the teacher. The teaching situation of HPO-type schools is one in which hardiness and physical stamina count as much as teaching ability. It is a teaching situation in which young experienced teachers often survive better than the young, inexperienced or older, experienced teachers.

The HPO type school respondents felt that they were cut off and abandoned. In most cases, the curriculum cannot be used. It was felt that the curriculum planners were drifting even further away from an understanding of what is needed. Teachers feel that their problems are not understood by the downtown office; that those who are to offer assistance, such as psychologists and curriculum consultants, are either too few in number or out of contact with their problems; that these problems are covered up by those in authority or no one in the public or authority really cares. Buffeted by all these forces which they feel are out of their control, most teachers give up in frustration after entering with dedication.

THE FOLLOW-UP STUDY:
IDENTIFYING AND ANALYZING DEVIANT INNER CITY SCHOOLS

It was possible to identify large geographical areas which contained many schools of one type. When teachers described their school situations they tended to agree that schools within their geographical areas were of similar types. Teachers in HPO areas seemed to feel, by and large, that in geographically adjacent schools the investigator would find the same kind of school situation as in the reporting teacher's school.

Nevertheless, teachers were able, in some instances, to identify geographically adjacent schools which had situations different from their own and which exhibited characteristics that differed from the schools surrounding them. For example, in some instances a school within a "cluster" of HPO-type schools was identified as a "better" school by teachers in other HPO-type schools. Upon visiting the school it was affirmed by the investigator that the school could be categorized as a PPO-type school despite the fact that it was surrounded by HPO-type schools and drew its students from similar out-of-school situations.

On the other hand, teachers could identify other schools in their geographical areas which had situations far worse than their school, and far worse than other HPO schools. The situation in these schools could only be described as "chaotic." The investigator visited these schools and indeed found a chaotic situation. The schools seemed to be in a constant uproar. Teachers were even more discouraged than in the "usual" HPO schools. Students' problems, both academic and behavioral, seemed to be greater and a general feeling of discouragement and even fear was present among the faculty.

A school was judged to have a poorer situation than the usual HPO-type school if all the teachers interviewed (1) had negative comments about the students and the school in general and (2) if all the teachers interviewed had their names on the transfer list and cited the situation in the school as the reason for transferring. The observations of the investigator were also used for a crude kind of verification. The school was judged to have a better situation than the usual HPO-type school if it met the description of the PPO school given above.

The two kinds of school situations differed from the general situation in their neighboring schools. One situation deviated towards the PPO and one towards a chaotic situation. The schools which differed from surrounding schools were termed "deviant" schools by the investigator.[3] This report will concentrate on these two kinds of deviant schools.

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[3]Deviant schools are those which have either a more favorable or less favorable school situation than have the schools which surround them.

The investigator was "referred" to deviant schools through the process described earlier when reporting on the major study. The deviant schools were investigated in a manner similar to, although less intensive than, that used to investigate the 40 schools in the larger study. Again, an attempt was made in each school to select both male and female teachers, teachers with differing years of experience, etc. Principals were familiar enough with the characteristics of their faculties so that they were able, with little difficulty, to assist the investigator in choosing teachers with one, or a combination of, the above characteristics. In almost every instance the interviews were held in private. However, a few interviews were held in the teachers' lounge or the teachers' lunchroom in a section of the room away from the other teachers.

The teachers were assured that anything they said would be confidential. Rapport was generally established in five or ten minutes, partly because the investigator let it be known that he too was a teacher. When teachers learned that the investigator was an "experienced" teacher on leave from a "difficult" school they became noticeably less defensive and more willing to talk.

After the interviews, many teachers said they had enjoyed the interview and offered their home telephone number in case the investigator had any more questions. Others gave the telephone number of friends in other schools whom they thought would be glad to speak to the investigator. Some asked for the investigator's telephone number, and six called the investigator later at his home with news not only about their school, but other schools as well. Thus, in addition to the formal interviews, informal interviews were held outside of school and an informal network of information was established.

For the following reasons, only deviant schools in the HPO school clusters will be dealt with in this report:

1. The greatest number of deviant schools was found in the HPO school clusters.
2. Knowing what factors may be involved in producing either an extremely "good" or a "chaotic" school in an HPO cluster may increase understanding of inner city schools. Such knowledge not only may point to the factors which are responsible for deviance in either direction among inner city schools, but may also help us understand deviation in other types of schools.

In general, the investigator found three possible reasons for the school's deviating from other schools in its cluster. These reasons seem to be: (1) The sources from which the principal took his cues for his administrative behavior (cues from the administrative hierarchy vs. cues from the faculty and community); (2) the grading structure of the school (K-6 vs. K-8); and (3) the system of grouping pupils for instruction (departmental vs. self-contained classrooms).

The reasons given above have yet to be investigated in enough depth to document their potency in causing the school to deviate from the types surrounding it. However, the data obtained from the interviewees, along with the investigator's personal observations, seem to indicate a strong possibility that the reasons cited for the deviants are valid ones. It is also clear, however, that further study utilizing more refined methods of measuring deviancy is needed before more definitive statements can be made.

Administrative Leadership: Behavioral Characteristics of "Successful" and "Unsuccessful" Principals

Of the three possible causal factors for the deviancy of a school, it is thought by the investigator that the most crucial is the quality of administrative leadership in the school. The principals who are operating PPO-type schools in HPO school clusters exhibited certain behavioral, and attitudinal characteristics which distinguished them from principals who are only holding the line in their schools or who are operating a chaotic school. We shall be concerned in this report with only two "types" of principals: (1) Those who are operating a PPO-type school in an HPO area and (2) Principals who seem to have HPO schools which had even poorer situations than the usual HPO-type school.

In a sense then, we are speaking of a school operated by a highly "successful" principal, as defined by the direction of variance of a school, and an "unsuccessful" principal, as defined by the poor situation in the school, based on teacher interview data and personal observation. The principals may be said to be placed on opposite ends of a continuum, or to be opposite types.[4]

The "successful" principals appeared to be those who (1) showed a willingness to move independently and decisively in matters affecting the faculty or school; (2) had a genuine empathy for the teaching staff and the residents of the neighborhood as well as an ability to show this empathy in a non-condescending manner; and (3) had a perception of the principal's role as one whose primary task is to assist the teachers to teach, even if it meant clashing with the wishes of the administrative hierarchy.

1. Willingness to move independently and decisively in matters affecting the faculty or school. Many times a situation will arise which requires an immediate decision. A principal may need to

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[4]Between these extremes there were the great number of "average" principals in the HPO-type schools who were neither eminently "successful" nor operating chaotic situations.

decide to suspend or expel an unruly pupil, grant permission for implementing an innovation proposed by a faculty member, or buy materials or books which are needed immediately and which may not be on the "approved" list of materials. The principal may decide either to move on his own initiative or wait to check with the administrative hierarchy. If he moves on his own initiative, based on his assessment of the situation and his professional judgment, the matter is taken care of, although, if there are repercussions, he may have to answer to an administrative superior. If, however, he waits to check with an administrative superior, he may meet with a refusal on such grounds as objectionable public relations (e.g., parent resistance to pupil suspensions) or improper policy (e.g., in the case of instructional innovation, a response that it is "not the policy of the Board to . . .").

Probably the biggest difference between the "successful" and "unsuccessful" principals is the matter of backing teachers on discipline problems. This includes such things as suspension and parental complaints. The "successful" principals were not as concerned about being judged as a good principal on the basis of the number of problem reports submitted or suspensions carried out. Nor were they afraid to risk parental complaints to the district office. In contrast, the "unsuccessful" principals either had the teachers handle their own problems or they removed the child from the classroom for a short while before returning the problem right back to the teacher.

The "successful" principal in a deviant school in an HPO-type area seemed to be less career or hierarchy oriented and more teacher-school oriented. It was reported by teachers that some of these principals had been passed up for promotion because, as one teacher stated, "He's more concerned about the welfare of these kids and his teachers than about what the district superintendent thinks."

Illustrations of the above points may be given through some selected quotes gathered from principals and teachers in deviant schools in an HPO area. The statements immediately following, and all others in the chapter, were selected as being representative of many statements describing principals' behavior in the "successful" and "unsuccessful" schools.

An example of how one principal took positive steps to improve the school situation may be seen in the following quote:

> A good, neat school has a beneficial effect on the teachers and pupils, and when they (the district office) told me they had cancelled our repairs and painting, I hit the ceiling. I got on the 'phone and politely asked the district, and downtown, what was up. They gave me some run-around. Well, I would call about twice

every week. They didn't like it, but before long we got what we needed.

The reluctance of a principal to move aggressively and independently in certain matters and the effect this has on his teachers may be seen in two teachers' descriptions of the behavior of two "unsuccessful" principals. It is also important to note the concern for the opinion of his administrative superiors shown by these "unsuccessful" principals.

One teacher stated of her past principal:

> The last school I was at there were no suspensions because the principal was afraid. The story was that the district superintendent didn't approve. But we have the same district superintendent in this school and there are suspensions.

She continued,

> At the other school I caught a girl smoking for the fifth time and took her down to the principal's office. The principal said to the girl: 'If you're caught the fifth time, you'll be suspended.' The girl told the principal: 'This is my fifth time.' And the principal said: 'Well, next time you'll be suspended.' Well this went on for eight times, and she still wasn't suspended. The kids that went to that school are the same kind of kids that go to this school. What's the difference? Well, obviously, it's the administration. I'm willing to work in this /geographical/ area but not without any support. I'm very highly satisfied for the first time in my teaching career, even though another time I had an assignment in a better area.

A teacher in another school stated of her former principal:

> The verbal abuse the teacher took was terrific. Some kids could come right out and say, "Go screw yourself," and of course, they used a worse word than 'screw.' We would send the kid down to the office and the principal would pat him on the head and send him right back up again. All the kid would do was apologize and that was that. One teacher was threatened by a kid because she wasn't going to pass him for graduation. She was told that if she didn't pass him, he was going to get her after school. Well, the principal stayed right in the office. She didn't want to touch this.
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> . . . Of course, the teachers were reluctant to send the kids down to the office because nothing happened. And even worse, if you did send them down, the kids came back from the office and made it worse because they had it in for you then and they knew nothing would happen to them. And if the kids were detained in the office, pretty soon you'd see them running around in the halls — they'd be messengers. They knew they could be a messenger so they

didn't mind going down to the office. In fact, they enjoyed it.

> We were told by the principal in a faculty meeting that 'We con't have any problems in the ____ school,' and everyone got the hint. And you know what? She's going up! She's getting promoted! She's leaving the ____ school to go to the ____ school, which is a bigger school.

The teacher's positive attitude toward her current school may be contrasted to the attitude of a male teacher in a chaotic HPO-type school who has his name on the transfer list and works under an "unsuccessful" principal:

> I'm leaving here because you get no backing. He's afraid how it's going to look downtown if he has some suspensions or some problem reports. At the faculty meetings, he tells us that he notices there's a relationship between good efficiency marks and number of problems sent down to the office. Well, you know what he's driving at.

2. Genuine empathy for the teaching staff and the residents of the neighborhood as well as an ability to show this empathy in a non-condescending manner. "Successful" principals reported they often acted on teachers' suggestions and tried to make every effort to understand the teachers' problems and alleviate the problems. Teachers in these schools felt that the principal indeed cared about them and their opinions and tried to help with their problems.

The "successful" principal often attempted to alleviate his problems even if doing so went against policy. The teachers also reported that he was willing to take the blame for his actions and shelter the teacher from blame if there were repercussions. One beginning teacher told the investigator of an incident which had taken place when the principal had independently helped her with one of her problems. She had told the principal that she "could not teach" with the movable type seating arrangements in her classroom. She had an over-age group with many discipline problems and the children would take every opportunity to scrape the desks on the floor, open the tops and bang them down. Little by little they would inch the desks forward until (by the close of the day), they were almost against the front blackboard.

The young teacher felt that stationary desks in her room would help her maintain control. She requested these types of desks for her room, if only for the semester. However, there was a district policy that stationary desks could not be reinstated in schools which had made the complete change from stationary to movable desks. Despite the district policy, the principal felt it more important to help the teacher. He hunted up 35 stationary desks and had about ten of them already installed when the district

superintendent came for a visit. Following this visit, the desks were ordered taken out, and, according to the teacher, the principal received a reprimand. The principal did not tell the district superintendent that the teacher was having difficulty with the children and that she had requested the desks. He said instead that it was his idea to install the desks because the movable desks were too noisy.

The "successful" principal attempted to relieve his teachers of clerical duties even if doing so meant that his school clerk or he himself had to do teachers' clerical work. In one school the principal put himself on the duty assignment list and (when he could) stood yard duty with his teachers.

"Successful" principals made definite efforts to work with the community. Most had set up communications with the ministers in the area, the leaders of the community organizations and the captain of the local district police station. They had attended functions at the neighborhood parks or those held by neighborhood organizations. Some had brought their wives or husbands with them.

The following quotations will help to illustrate the behavioral characteristics mentioned above. The first quote is from an interview with a "successful" principal in a deviant school in an HPO-type area. Her attitude toward her faculty and empathy with her teachers is probably a big factor in producing the positive feelings that the investigator found among the teachers. She stated:

> I run my school on the assumption that the teacher is the most important part of the school system and that every one and everything in the system exists only to help that person in the classroom. Downtown, myself, the district superintendent, all of us exist for only one reason, and that's to facilitate the work of the teacher. All these concepts that they come up with are nonsense unless we help the teacher in the classroom.
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> It's important that they /the teachers/ feel that the administration is democratic. They have to be able to feel they can make mistakes; be part of a profession; be free to experiment; to have time to know the children's parents and neighborhood; and to learn to talk up in a group of other teachers without fear. These people /the teachers/ are the ones who count.
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> You know the city of Denver has put out a rather terrific thing. It's a chart of the school system and how it's set up. You know how ours is? It has the superintendent on the top, then the assistant superintendent, and then

you go down. You know who the city of Denver has on top? It has the teachers on top, and then it goes down.

A beginning teacher in a deviant school mentions how his principal independently altered the school curriculum based on the teachers' recommendations. He also provides some insight into how a good principal can provide help for a young teacher by retaining experienced teachers.

> I like this school, and I'm staying, even though I live far north. I'm staying because of many things. Well, mainly the principal. I know that I can fall back on the principal and I can fall back on a whole core of people. Many of my problems can be sent to excellent master teachers — Mr. ____, Mrs. ____, and usually big ones end up with the principal. Another thing is that he backs you up and listens to you. Maybe in some things he's too easy, but you can't have everything. Another important thing is that we know where we stand with him, and also, we know where we stand with the curriculum. He has set up certain procedures for us to follow when handling the curriculum. He's altered the regular curriculum after planning with us. Whether he should have or not I don't know. But this is just one indication that he knows our problems. We are not ashamed to admit that we have a problem. He admits that these problems exist so, we're not afraid to admit them either. This helps tremendously. Another thing is that those who know Mr. ____ know that you can get excellent advice as to how to handle kids. In other words, we have an excellent principal and a core of people you can rely on.

In another large K-8 school in an HPO area, but which had a PPO type situation, a veteran teacher reinforced the idea that a principal who has empathy for his staff can be successful in retaining his teachers.

> I look around here and I've never seen better teachers in all the different schools that I've been at. This is a fine faculty. It all boils down to the guy who can get people to stay here — and we have that kind of guy. I came to this school because he /the principal/ was here. He knows your problems and listens to you when you have something to say about them. And if you have something good to say he considers it and often acts on it. That kind of thing really makes an impression because you feel you have something to say. It makes a difference. People said I was off my rocker coming to a school in this area, but I like it here. I really do. I think that many of the accomplishments that we see, or that you see around here, are largely due to his methods. I also feel, to a great degree that it is not

necessarily the (geographical) area, it is how well a man can keep a nucleus of good teachers around him.

Many teachers who have done their practice teaching at the above school have asked to be assigned there. Other teachers continue to come to the school from long distances. This principal's attitude, which undoubtedly accounts for part of his success in retaining his teachers, was described in this comment:

> I tell my teachers that the periods when their kids may be at gym or library are free periods. One of my older teachers came up to me and said, 'Don't you think it would sound better if we called it preparation periods? There may be some complaint from the district or downtown.' And I said, 'No. They are free periods.' I want those teachers to understand that if they want to rest, they can rest. They need it and they deserve it. Although I found that the great majority of them do use it for preparation or for marking papers or for handling the records, I still like them to think of it as a free period. Kids and teachers need this type of thing. I've worked in industry and I know that these eight hour days are not eight hour days. I don't care what job you're in, you don't have to constantly face your clients, your business associates, your boss; you can break off when you want, you can go to the washroom when you want, you can take a smoke when you want. But in some situations, a teacher can't even go to the washroom because she can't leave the group alone. You have to remember that these people are on the firing line constantly, and this is a strain, emotionally and physically. When I first started teaching, I found that I would stay at the school very late, take home papers every night, and I'd work my head off. After a couple of years, I bogged down and I found myself in a rut. Teachers shouldn't have to be so dedicated that they ruin themselves and affect their family life. I'm not easy with my teachers but I understand their problems. Leadership is understanding; leadership is person-to-person work. I make it a point to go around to talk to the teachers. I send them notes thanking them for what they have done and I make certain that, at the very least, after they have done something, that I tell them how glad I am to have them 'on deck.'

3. Perception of the principal's role as one whose primary task is to assist the teacher to teach. "Successful" principals in HPO-type schools tried their best to keep extraneous and non-classroom matters from interfering with the teachers. Directives from higher offices which they thought would interfere with the teachers in the classroom were sometimes ignored.

By way of contrast, many of the "unsuccessful" principals seemed to be insistent on following directives to the letter. An example of this occurred in one district when a directive was issued stating that the minutes of a certain meeting of the Board of Education were to be read to teachers during their meeting on "record day."[5] The investigator was re-visiting this very chaotic school on that day. During the teachers' meeting, the principal read the minutes as "ordered," for one hour and 30 minutes. After the investigator and the faculty shook off their drowsiness, one wag asked the principal, "Could you read that again? I missed some sections." The principal glared at the teacher and said, "There was a directive that I read this and I've read it." Meanwhile, the teachers had lost a total of two and a half hours of the precious time needed to complete records. This meant they probably would have to stay past the 3:15 dismissal time if they wanted to be prepared for the next day.

That same day the investigator called two "successful" principals in HPO type schools from the same district and asked if they had read the minutes to their faculty. Neither one had. One stated to the investigator,

> The hell if I did! What do you think I am? Some kind of an idiot? Just because some nut with a screw loose thinks the teachers have nothing to do but listen to me, I'm not going to prove I have a screw loose too. With all the work my teachers have to do on record day, do you think I'm going to waste their time with that? Sure, I'll tell the 'Super' I did — but — come now . . .

The "successful" principals tried to maintain a schedule in which the teachers can spend as much time as possible in the classroom without outside interference. They frequently devised ingenious ways of saving teachers' time in collecting lunch and milk money, and in the distribution of district and school bulletins.

In contrast to the "successful" principals, principals in HPO areas whose schools were reported to have very poor situations, exhibited different kinds of behavior. They did not move independently but waited for or solicited cues from the hierarchy. They did not have many avenues of communication open between themselves and the teaching staff. They thought the business of the school was to teach children and not become involved with the community. Their orientation was toward fulfilling the expectations of the hierarchy and not those of the teachers and neighborhood. They operated within, and willingly accepted, the confines of the bureaucratic

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[5] "Record day" is the day before the semester is over and the children are dismissed so the teachers may organize their records.

structure, and did not wish to deviate from the expectations and norms of this structure. It was almost as if the school existed so the hierarchy and the bureaucratic structure might function instead of the hierarchy and bureaucratic structure existing so that the school might function.

Statements which recurred with much frequency and were related to all three points (independence of movement, empathy for staff and area, perception of principals' roles as helping teachers to teach) described the preoccupation of the "unsuccessful" principal with the opinions of his administrative superiors. The "successful" principal, on the other hand, did not seem so much concerned about the opinions of his superiors but was concerned about the functioning of his school, his faculty and the community. This concern influenced whether or not the principal would make independent decisions, whether he would transfer empathy toward his staff into action, and whether he would take into account procedures which he felt assisted the teachers even though these procedures departed from the book. One quote from a male teacher in a chaotic school sums up the behavior of an "unsuccessful" principal on this matter.

> He operates everything by the book, without realizing that you have to adapt the book to the situation. He's afraid to operate on his own because he's afraid of how it will look downtown if someone questions him.

The preceding discussions of the three points indicate that one can often distinguish between the opposite types (the "successful" and "unsuccessful" principals in schools in very low-income neighborhoods based not only on the actions of the principals but also upon the source from whom the principal gets his cues for behavior. The "unsuccessful" principal seems to take his cues for behavior from the hierarchy of the school system. He often judges his own administrative action in relation to how the hierarchy might react to the results of his action. He gives superficial consideration to teachers' suggestions for fear they will suggest something that, if implemented, might cause embarrassment or difficulties for the hierarchy. He hesitates to move decisively on matters which may be affecting the teachers' effectiveness if moving decisively may place him in conflict with the hierarchy. Often he does not take any action at all or only enough action to alleviate a problem momentarily without really solving it. Because of his reliance upon the administrative hierarchy, he seems to have little flexibility when taking actions or making decisions. The "unsuccessful" principal, then, seems to be a <u>rigid, hierarchy-oriented principal</u>.

The principal in a "successful" school which deviates from the HPO-type does not rely at all on the administrative hierarchy for behavioral cues, but that he solicits information from his

faculty and the residents in the area the school serves. He uses this information to help him decide how he will run his school. If the information is helpful, he uses it; if not, he discards it. He then sets up his own school structure helped by his faculty and the community. He therefore seems to ignore the hierarchy and the formalities of the bureaucratic structure. Less concerned with the hierarchy, he need not be rigid in operating the school. When questionable decisions must be made he can move independently and hope for the best. The "successful" principal, then, seems to be non-rigid, personnel-oriented.

This is not to say that all principals in "successful" schools which deviate from the HPO type who are non-rigid, personnel-oriented have PPO-type school situations nor is it to say that they do not have any problems in their schools. Some schools are simply faced with too great a number of problems for a principal to handle successfully. Further, not all the HPO-type situations are caused by poor administrative leadership.

Nor should we assume from the above that the majority of the incompetent principals are found in HPO-type schools. There is a strong possibility that the peculiar problems of HPO-type schools simply overwhelm the "average" administrator who would be competent in any other situation. This contention is strongly supported in a study by Herriott and St. John in which it was found that the quality of the principals' performance was related to the quality of the teachers' performance for schools in low-income neighborhoods but not for schools in more privileged neighborhoods.

Two other studies, one by Robert E. Herriott and Neal Gross[6] and one by Halpin and Croft,[7] have a direct bearing on the present discussion. These are probably the two most widely quoted studies dealing with the effects of administrative behaviors on the school situation. In their study Gross and Herriott attempted to measure the relationship between the Executive Professional Leadership (EPL) of principals in elementary schools and the teachers' morale and performance. They found that the higher the EPL of the principal, the higher the morale of the teachers and the better their performance. The behaviors of the "successful" principals in the present study paralleled the behaviors of the principals who were high in Executive Professional Leadership and who were successful principals according to Herriott and Gross.

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[6]Neal Gross and Robert E. Herriott, Staff Leadership in Public Schools: A Sociological Inquiry (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965).

[7]Andrew W. Halpin and Don B. Croft, The Organizational Climate of Schools (The University of Chicago; Midwest Administration Center, 1963).

Halpin and Croft spoke of the influence the principal's behavior had in establishing the "climate" in the school. In their study, it seemed to the investigator that the behaviors of the principals who produced an "Open Climate," (indicative of a favorable school situation) resembled behaviors of the non-rigid, personnel-oriented principal, and the behaviors which produced a "Closed Climate" (indicative of an unfavorable school situation) resembled those of the rigid, hierarchy-oriented principal.

In the present study, the non-rigid, personnel-oriented principals seemed to have established school climates which resembled the Open Climate described by Halpin and Croft. It was the impression of the investigator that teachers in these schools appeared to have higher morale, and to be more friendly toward each other. On the other hand, it was the impression of the investigator that the teachers in the schools of the rigid, hierarchy-oriented principal did not exhibit this sense of closeness or high morale. The total situation in these schools seemed closer to the Closed Climate.

Thus the conclusions of this section of the present report find some support from research studies by Halpin and Croft and by Gross and Herriott. These studies provide a basis for believing that there are real differences between the behavior of non-rigid personnel-oriented and rigid, hierarchy-oriented principals in HPO-type schools.

What neither study does, however, is deal with the sources that may be influencing the behaviors of the principals they studied. Neither study fully explores the possible sources from which the principal takes his cues for behavior. This question seems to be a very crucial one in understanding why the principals differ in their leadership behaviors.

Gross and Herriott briefly mention the possibility of the principal's behavior being influenced by the hierarchy. They write:

> The principal's relationship with his administrative superiors may influence his relationship with his staff. A number of administrative officials such as superintendents, deputy and associate superintendents, assistant and district superintendents outrank a principal in the city's school system. Thus, a sociological perspective of the principalship leads us to speculate on the effect of his behavior with attitudes of higher administration on the professional leadership principals offer to their teachers.

Continuing, they point out that the greater the EPL of the higher administrator, the greater the possibility that the principal will have high EPL. But they do not directly pursue the possibility that the principal selects different sources for his behavioral cues. They do not explore the possibility that the high EPL of a principal

may originate in his willingness to take cues from the faculty rather than the administrative hierarchy.

At one point in their study, Gross and Herriott come close to dealing with a cue source when they write: "In a study of EPL the concept of role also points to the importance of discovering how a principal's job is defined by those in the orbit of his role, i.e., his role network. There are individuals who are the source of the rewards and sanctions to which the educational administrator is exposed and who, in consequence, may influence his behavior."[8] But they do not pursue the possibility that the principal high in EPL may be orienting himself toward a role network which includes mainly the administrative hierarchy.

The present study indicates that the source of cues may be a very significant consideration. The rigid, hierarchy-oriented principal looks to the administrative hierarchy for cues and the non-rigid, personnel oriented principal looks to the faculty and neighborhood rather than the administrative hierarchy.

Grading Structure of the School and Academic Grouping in the School

It is possible to argue more strongly that the principals' administrative behavior, based on the sources to which he is cued, is a crucial causal factor in producing a deviant school in an HPO cluster, than it is to argue that the grading structure of a school or the academic grouping practices used within it are causal factors in explaining deviancy. There has not been any research related to this problem and the investigator was unable to gather sufficient interview data to justify a strong statement. Therefore, these factors are offered primarily to indicate additional possible causes of deviance and as suggestions for further research.

It seemed to the investigator that no K-6 school in an HPO cluster had as many discipline problems or as poor a school climate as K-8 schools in the same cluster. All of the K-6 schools visited in the HPO clusters (10 schools) and all of the K-6 schools visited in the PPO clusters (5 schools) seemed to be "successfully" deviant schools. One of the reasons for this deviance seems to be that the K-6 school loses the students before they reach the more troublesome stage in their school life. The teachers and principals who were interviewed seemed to feel that when the students reach the latter part of the fifth grade and the beginning of the sixth grade, they become

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[8] Gross and Herriott, op. cit., p. 23.

apathetic regarding their academic work, harder to control, more hostile and more belligerent.[9] In almost every K-6 school visited, the faculty was in agreement that there are changes in students' attitudes and behaviors when they reach these grades. For example, a teacher in a K-6 school in an HPO cluster states:

> This is a good school and the children who come here compare very favorably with those who went to the ____, (a PPO-type school). They seem to change somewhat when they're in the sixth grade but they can be handled because there are not many sixth grades in the building. We lose them to (an upper grade center) just as they really begin to become terrors.

A master teacher who had many years experience in a K-8 HPO-type school, changed into a K-6 school, remarked:

> There was a definite change for the better when the seventh and eighth graders were removed. We used to have some really tough characters over here. Many of them were overage. They were very socially maladjusted. Well, here they were, 17 years old or 16 years old and still in grammar school. Now, how do you get a 17-year-old boy to start reading fourth grade work? Even though they weren't over age, one could still notice a change when they reached seventh grade. There seems to be more hostility and they seem to want to emulate the trouble-makers more. Before they took the seventh and eighth graders out of here I would say that this was a container institution. There was a lot of physical danger, and by that I mean fighting in the playground and fighting in the neighborhood. To some extent, it was terrible. I can remember that. We were able to keep control in the classroom and there was some teaching going on, but not too much.

There was a tendency on the part of teachers in K-8 schools to perceive the change in their students' attitudes and behavior as having taken place at a lower grade level. Teachers in K-8 schools felt that the children in the seventh and eighth grades influence the children in the lower grades. Because of this influence the teachers in the K-8 schools felt that by the time the child was in the fourth grade he was taking his cues for behavior from the seventh and

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[9] Allan C. Ornstein, teacher in a Special Service in New York writes, "By the time the disadvantaged reach junior high school, they are more rebellious and frustrated; consequently, the problems of discipline are more acute." Integrated Education, Vol. IV, No. 3 (June-July, 1966), pp. 40-41.

eighth grade children. It was felt by the teachers in K-8 schools that (because of the influence of older children) the younger children became difficult at about the end of the fourth grade and beginning of the fifth grade.

Academic Grouping

The kind of academic grouping also seemed to influence the situation in the school. Teachers in K-8 schools which were organized on the basis of self-contained classrooms were more favorably disposed towards their school situation than teachers in schools operating on a departmental system. The primary reasons for favoring self-contained classrooms were related to the increased control the teachers were able to achieve in the latter situation.

The teachers in PPO type and HPO type K-8 schools which had changed from a departmental system to self-contained classrooms mentioned that their control of the students improved to such a degree that their behavioral problems were reduced and the total school situation seemed to improve. They also felt that the time saved in not changing classes could be spent on classroom work. The teachers in schools in HPO clusters felt the self-contained classroom system was far superior to the departmental system.

Comments of teachers in PPO and HPO type schools which had changed from the departmental system to self-contained classrooms illustrate the advantages in control of behavioral problems and the increase in class time. Said one teacher in an HPO type school:

> Changing classes was bedlam here. They would disturb the lower grades, which didn't change, and the kids who were changing would become upset as well. And then there was the problem of calming them down once they came into class, which wasted at least seven or ten minutes.

Similarly, a principal in an HPO type school stated:

> We changed last semester from departmental to self-contained and it's made all the difference in the world. It has cut down on some of our fights and kids ducking classes.

An eighth grade science teacher in one HPO type school still operating on the departmental system said:

> When that departmental bell rings, I have to get out in the halls to supervise the kids. Then my leaving class can't be supervised. When something happens in the halls and I'm out there, my entering class raises cain.

> Then, when I come in to calm them down, there's more racket in the hall. After that I have to come back into the classroom again and calm the class down. Of course, with all this going on, with my being a policeman and everything, I'm supposed to change into a teacher calmly instructing my pupils.

Sometimes the change from departmental to self-contained organization is influential in altering a teacher's attitude. Said one teacher:

> My opinion of the students was very low and I just lumped them all together. Now, with my own class, I see them more as individuals and we are getting better rapport. I think they feel more secure now, and I know I certainly do. But with so many (students) coming in before, it was hard to think of their behavior in any other terms but as out to 'get' me. Now I see they are reacting to their problems and I wish I could help, even if some of them do get me down.

In contrast to the teachers in PPO and HPO type schools, teachers in HAO and AAO type schools favored the departmental grouping because of the advantages of having a teacher for each particular subject. To these teachers, the advantages and superiority of the departmental system over the self-contained classroom were stated in terms of academic gain. Thus, a principal in an HAO type school stated:

> Departmental or self-contained, one is as good as the other. If you've got a good teacher in the classroom, she can teach no matter how the school is organized. It's best to have one person who is a 'specialist' teaching the subject. The kids get more from it.

To the teachers in the PPO and HPO type schools, the advantages and superiority of the self-contained classroom over the departmental system were considered in terms of the advantages of behavioral control which might then lead to academic gain.

In this report the investigator cited three possible causes which may account for some schools in HPO clusters deviating from their neighboring schools. The strongest influence was thought to be the principal. If he was oriented to the faculty and neighborhood for information to assist him in making decisions, he tended to be a non-rigid, personnel-oriented principal, and the school situation seemed to be a very good one. If he was oriented to the hierarchy for behavioral cues, he tended to be a rigid, hierarchy-oriented principal, and the school situation seemed to be chaotic. The two other possible causes were the grading structure of the school and the way the school grouped pupils for academic work. The latter two are highly tentative and require

more research before any reliable statements may be made as to their being explanations for deviancy.

Summary

The investigator identified schools in PPO and HPO clusters which differed from the remainder of the cluster schools surrounding them. In HPO clusters most of these deviant schools resembled PPO type school situations and in the PPO clusters most of the deviant schools resembled AAO type school situations.

Three factors were identified which seemed to be related to this deviancy. These factors were: (1) the grading structure of the school (K-6 vs. K-8); (2) the system of grouping pupils for instruction (departmental vs. self-contained classrooms); and (3) most important, the sources from which the principal took his cues for his administrative behavior (cues from the administrative hierarchy vs. cues from the faculty and community). The investigator concluded that the most crucial variable associated with whether an HPO type school would have a PPO type situation was the administrative leadership.[10]

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[10] Particularly since the grading and grouping practices often are established by the principal and hence themselves might be considered as falling under the heading of "administrative leadership."

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS CONCERNING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE INNER CITY SCHOOL

Daniel U. Levine

Though Mr. Doll's findings suggest that grading and grouping practices in low income or "inner city" schools play a part in differentiating between those which seem to function fairly well and the large majority which do not appear to be functioning successfully, he makes a convincing case for the conclusion that "the most crucial factor" which sets the former apart from the latter is truly outstanding administrative leadership of an order infrequently found in any organization. The inner city school needs not just a better-than-average principal if it is to provide a more adequate education for its economically disadvantaged students, but rather a principal who is so unusually fitted for this almost insuperably difficult position that he represents something of an anamoly within the ranks of educational leadership.

The significance we place on this conclusion does not derive from any claim that it has been previously unrecognized among educators or laymen interested in or knowledgeable about the quality of education in inner city schools. As a matter of fact, the point has been made or argued in a variety of sources (including others previously carried out at the Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems in Education).[11] For example, Dr. Kenneth Clark — surely one of the nation's foremost authorities on the education of inner city children — recently remarked during a panel conducted at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions that:

> In our survey of schools in Harlem, we found two or three schools — and not necessarily in the more affluent parts of Harlem, either — in which the achievement level of the children was consistently higher than the norm for the area as a whole. When we tried to find out what made that difference the only thing we could come up with was the principal and what he required of his teachers.[12]

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[11] Daniel U. Levine and Martha Lewis, "An Assessment of the Impact of a Highly Rated Negro High School on the Perception of Its Students," Urban Education, Vol. III, No. 2 (1967), p. 101.

[12] Kenneth Clark, "Ghetto Education," Center Magazine, Vol. I, No. 7 (November 1968), p. 56.

Similarly, Adelaide Jablonsky concluded a series of generalizations drawn from a broad survey of recent developments in educating the disadvantaged by stating that:

> In some school systems, an isolated school will be identified as doing an exceptional job of educating disadvantaged children, as evidenced by community support, academic achievement, or other criteria. These objectives are achieved far beyond those obtained by comparable schools without direct reference to special funds, although special funding is at times in evidence. In each of these schools, one finds a dynamic, determined, and competent principal who has inspired children, parents, and teachers to join in the successful venture.[13]

Thus a conclusion emphasizing the central importance of the principal in the inner city school is not remarkable for its originality. As described on the preceding pages, however, the argument has been made more systematically and has been based on a more fully developed rationale than previously has been the case, to our knowledge, anywhere in the extensive literature on educating the disadvantaged.

How well does the argument that the principal is the key factor in determining whether an inner city school functions relatively well or poorly stand the test of consistency with available research dealing with the problems and situation of the inner city school? In our opinion, very well. To judge by the published literature, little actual research has been conducted in this important area, despite the high degree of interest which exists in improving public education for the disadvantaged. But the findings from studies which have been carried out appear to be fully campatible with an emphasis on the role and skills of the principal as the critical factor in overcoming the special problems of the inner city school and hence in accounting for the success of the infrequently-encountered well-functioning inner city school. Consider, for example, the findings of the following studies:

1. Summarizing a recent study of "Problem Situations Encountered by School Principals in Different Socioeconomic Settings," Cross and Bennett have reported that:

> . . . there were significant differences between problems of principals of 'high' schools and problems of principals of 'low' schools on all three dimensions of the taxonomy [of administrative problems]. . . .

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[13] Adelaide Jablonsky, "Some Trends in Education for the Disadvantaged," IRCD Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 2 (March 1968), p. 3.

> . . . Principals of low socioeconomic schools appear to be forced into the role of the counter punching manager who is under persistent pressure from human relations problems. The high number of problems of an appellate nature (60.9%) indicates that the majority of the actions of principals in low socioeconomic settings were reactions to the initiative of others. Principals in high socioeconomic schools also appeared to be under pressure from appellate problems, but to a lesser degree (40.5%). Fifty-three percent of the problems of principals in 'high' schools were creative in origin compared to 31.8% for principals in 'low' schools. It would appear that just as bad money drives out good, appellate problems drive out creative ones. A principal who is bombarded with appellate problems has little time to generate creative problems.
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> A second interesting comparison is the type of skill required of principals in the two settings. . . . The problems of principals of low socioeconomic schools most frequently required human skill (46.6%) while those encountered by principals of high socioeconomic schools most often required technical skills (43%).[14]

2. Based on interviews conducted with the principals of 16 Title I schools in Kansas City, Missouri, Moorefield and Vial concluded that inner city principals were so overwhelmed by problems related to student disadvantage and misbehavior[15] as to render them virtually ". . . unable to perform, to the extent they would prefer, their responsibilities as instructional leaders in their buildings."[16] While Moorefield and Vial did not obtain comparable data from principals in non-Title I schools outside the inner city, it would be extremely difficult for knowledgeable observers to believe that

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[14] Ray Cross and Vernon S. Bennett, "Problem Situations Encountered by School Principals in Different Socioeconomic Settings," Paper presented at the 1969 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, California, February 4-8, 1969, pp. 15-16.

[15] Among the thirteen problems which consumed the lion's share of the time of these inner city principals were: emotional problems of children; attitudes of pupils toward school; self-concept of pupils; discipline; poor academic achievement; partial-pay lunches; free lunches; tardiness of pupils; clothing; and attendance.

[16] Thomas E. Moorefield and Lynda W. Vial, "The Public School Principal in the Inner City," (Kansas City, Missouri: The School District of Kansas City, Missouri, Department of Research and Development, March, 1968), p. 10.

the principals of these latter schools were as heavily inundated by problems related to student misbehavior and disadvantage as were their colleagues in the inner city.

3. As part of a national study of school variables and educational leadership in differing types of urban schools, Herriott and St. John found that the performance of principals of schools in lower status neighborhoods was much more highly and consistently correlated with performance ratings of their teachers than was true in higher status schools. Among the aspects of administrative functioning which showed the highest correlation between teacher and principal performance ratings in low status schools were the following: Planning generally for the school; keeping the school office running smoothly; resolving student discipline problems; getting teachers to use new educational methods; getting teachers to coordinate their activities; and handling parental complaints.[17]

4. Summarizing a study in which miniature video cameras were used to obtain observations in school offices in four schools ". . . representing combinations of 'high' and 'low' socioeconomic settings and 'open' and 'closed' organizational climates," Virjo reported that:

> 'High' setting and 'open' climate were positively associated with a wide variety in types of problems and initiators; while 'low' setting and 'closed' climate associated positively with primarily pupil-behavior type problems, and initiators providing primarily corrective and regulatory services (attendance agent, nurse, and police). . . .
>
> Whereas, principals were the most frequent initiators of problems in 'high' settings and 'open' climates, pupils were the most frequent initiators in 'low' setting and 'closed' climate schools.[18]

Based on these findings, Virjo concluded that:

> The press on principals in 'low'setting schools was primarily from the inside, in terms of time-consuming pupil behavior problems; while the press in 'high' settings was from the outside, in terms of parental expectations.

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[17] Robert Herriott and Nancy St. John, Social Class and the Urban School (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966).

[18] Helen E. Virjo, "Effect of Socioeconomic Setting and Organizational Climate on Problems Brought to Elementary School Office," Detroit, Michigan: Detroit Public Schools Research Department, Summary of Dissertation, December, 1965.

> Because of the amount of human traffic, offices in 'low' setting schools were busier, more harassed, and crisis-oriented centers than offices in 'high' settings. . . .
>
> A major obstruction to exercise of the principal's leadership in the 'low-closed' school was the usurpation by pupils of the initiation of problems.[19]

Reviewing these bits-and-pieces of evidence on the situations and problems which differentiate inner city and middle class schools, it seems clear that the inner city school presents a much greater challenge to the practicing or potential school administrator. From just about every point of view, the inner city principal has a larger and more complex task to perform than do most of his colleagues in less difficult schools.

Due to discrepancies between the cultural orientation of disadvantaged pupils and the expectations typically held for them by teachers, for example, the principal who strives to provide an effective motivating environment for pupils in the inner city school must work much harder with his teachers to achieve a consistent instructional program than is true in middle-income schools.[20]

Similarly, high rates of retardation in reading not only reflect the learning problems as disadvantaged pupils but also inevitably create extra problems regarding such matters of record keeping, pupil alienation, and inappropriateness of available materials and equipment in the inner city school.

Faced with a whole host of problems characteristic of and sometimes unique to the inner city school, administrators and teachers understandably feel themselves vulnerable to criticism from their subordinates in the school district hierarchy as well as from the clients whom they are paid to serve. It is natural, in this situation, for individuals to become defensive concerning their past performance and fearful that "outsiders" will question their professional competence and their personal integrity. If this process of institutional failure and defensiveness persists for any significant period of time, it is not long before administrators as well as teachers are expending as much psychic and physical energy trying to "make themselves look good" and maintaining their professional self-image as in working to achieve the institution's

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Daniel U. Levine, "Cultural Diffraction in the Social System of the Low-Income School," School and Society, Vol. 96, No. 2306 (March 30, 1968), pp. 206-207, 210.

fundamental mission; thus Doll's finding that inner city administrators generally seem more concerned with maintaining their position in the school district hierarchy than with taking vigorous action which directly or indirectly might call public or central office attention to the depth of the problems existing in their schools.

Burdened with problems involving pupil behavior, teacher frustration, and other conditions within the school, pressed to demonstrate a high order of skill in solving time-consuming technical problems as well as serious human relations problems involving students, teachers, and community, and constantly tempted to temporarily smooth problems over with expedient and superficial responses which are not really addressed to the fundamental nature of these problems, the inner city principal tends to be as much or more overwhelmed by this challenge as are any of his teachers. It is only the very uncommon administrator — regardless of how well-intentioned he is or how successful he might have been or might be in other school situations — who will possess the energy, the range of skills, the resolution, the insight into school and community problems, the natural leadership, and other qualities needed to cope with the unusually varied, pressing, and complex array of problems to be found in the inner city school. No wonder the ratings given to him by his teachers correlate more highly with their performance than is true in the middle class school where one can presume that average-to-good leadership is sufficient to establish a smooth operation in which other matters become equally or more salient to teachers as the performance of the administrators. No wonder that indications in the study reported in this pamphlet point to unusually skilled administrative leadership as the factor which differentiates well-functioning inner city schools from the large majority of such schools which are not functioning nearly so satisfactorily.

Judging by the speeches being made and the actions being taken in big city school districts in various parts of the country, school officials in these cities are beginning to become more cognizant of the central role of the principal in the inner city school and more inclined to take radical action to bring about administrative reform commensurate with the importance of the need for change. In a few instances, for example, particularly forward-looking superintendents and school board members have begun to throw away or at least circumvent the conventional rule book for the recruitment, selection, and promotion of big city school administrators, despite the fact that even minor steps in this direction usually stir up violent opposition from individuals or groups less inclined to tamper with the status quo. Thus a recent article on education in Newark, New Jersey, reported that the board of education had voted to abolish written and oral examinations for

the appointment of administrators in favor of a "system under which applicants for administrative positions will be recommended by a screening committee."[21] In Detroit, similarly, a plan was worked out to "by-pass" the existing promotions list for principals by instituting "a special screening process" designed to increase the number of black principals in the school district,[22] and the Detroit Superintendent of Schools was quoted as publicly recognizing that:

> 'We cannot use the standard procedure of the past for picking administrators. Tests may not be relevant,' he said, adding that leadership and community relations should be given more weight.[23]

Unfortunately, however, these encouraging stirrings toward a recognition of the centrality of administrative leadership in the inner city school constitute little more than the faint beginnings of a comprehensive, full-scale program for providing inner city schools with the uniquely qualified and unusually able principals and assistant principals these schools soon must have if more effective education is to be provided for the economically disadvantaged students who attend classes there.

The components in a comprehensive effort to obtain potentially-successful administrative leadership in the inner city would include at least the following changes in practices which presently are widespread in big city school districts throughout the United States:

1. As implied above, elimination or minimization of formal written and oral qualifying examinations which reveal a great deal about how a candidate can perform on a written or oral test but almost nothing about his potential for administering an inner city school.

It is possible that formal written and oral examinations once were useful in helping reduce corruption, nepotism, and favoritism in big city school districts, but their utilization in the administrative selection process no longer is functional in the big cities. Not only do these tests tend to screen out candidates with a disadvantaged background whose knowledge of the inner city is needed to deal with the educational and other problems which are so acute in inner city schools, but the formal testing system

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[21] "Newark School Reform," Phi Delta Kappan, November 1968, p. 161.

[22] "Accelerate Efforts to Place More Negro Administrators," Ibid.

[23] Henry De Zutter, "Integrating Public School Brass," Chicago Daily News, Tuesday, November 19, 1968, p. 4.

often lends itself to manipulation or to the appearance of manipulation, either of which has the effect of reinforcing built-in tendencies toward selection for conformity and passivity rather than independence and initiative.

2. Elimination of credentials requirements which bear no relation to a candidate's competence or promise as an inner city administrator.

Probably the most damaging of the requirements generally used to qualify for big-city administrative positions is possession of an advanced degree from an accredited college or university. Here again, as a matter of fact, present arrangements for selecting administrators actually tend to work against the goal of improving administrative leadership in the inner city. Since all but a handful of higher education institutions not only screen out candidates who perform poorly on formal tests but then carefully socialize graduate students in how to steer cautiously through a multitude of hidden as well as visible obstacles to the attainment of a degree, those who survive are less rather than more likely to be individuals with the independence needed for success in the inner city. In this context school district requirements for an advanced degree can be viewed as constituting a systematic program for producing an elite or irrelevantly-qualified mandarins rather than a cadre of able principals. By participating in these arrangements, big city school districts thereby frequently ensure that their most promising candidates will be excluded at one or another point in the selection process.

3. Pre-service and in-service training programs far more extensive than those presently provided for inner city administrators.

Considering the wide range of technical, human, and conceptual skills required to deal with the pressing problems which confront the inner city administrator, it is difficult to imagine how a candidate can be adequately prepared without participating in a full-time training program at least one and possibly even two years in duration.[24] For administrators already in service, similarly, effective training programs to enhance the competence of building principals and assistant principals in the inner city would have to be far more intensive and systematic than are the occasional workshops or summer institutes presently available to or required of big city school administrators.

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[24] Daniel U. Levine, "Training Administrators for Inner City Schools: A Proposal," The National Elementary Principal, Vol. XLVI, No. 3 (January 1967), pp. 17-19.

One point which should be particularly emphasized is that a one- or two-year training program for potential inner city administrators also could be used to overcome existing deficiencies in the process of recruiting and selecting candidates. Whether conducted at a higher education institution or some independent outside agency, such a program allows for and facilitates the recruitment and selection of candidates by personnel outside the regular school district hierarchy, thus reducing the strong and almost inevitable thrust toward selection of candidates who can get along within the system in preference to individuals willing to shake up the organization in hopes that it can be made to work.

4. Promotion practices which do not punish administrators who take action that causes discomfort for officials in the school district hierarchy.

Obviously it does not make sense to give central office personnel — no matter how sincere and capable they may be — the major voice in making decisions concerning the promotion of field administrators if the goals of the organization are to reward administrators whose foremost orientation is toward effectuating improvement in the inner city school and to remove administrators for whom this necessity is a verbal slogan rather than a prescription for action. By implication, then, new arrangements and mechanisms are needed for determining the placement and promotion of inner city administrators. Among the approaches which could or should be used to replace the present practice of making these determinations primarily within the school district hierarchy would be: (a) to employ outside agencies such as a management consulting firm to assess the performance of inner city principals; (b) to emphasize concrete criteria such as changes in achievement, attendance, teacher satisfaction, etc., in distributing salary increases and status promotions to administrators; and (c) to give parents and other citizen groups a major voice in decisions involving the selection, placement, promotion, and remuneration of inner city administrators.

5. Revision of policies which result in short tenure in a particular school.

Promotions policies in many big city school districts often serve to move principals from one school to another just at the time that an administrator has become really well acquainted with his teaching staff and with the community served by the school. Most often these policies take the form of salary differentials scaled according to size and/or grade organization of the school. In Chicago, for example, policies in effect throughout the late 1950's and early 1960's set up a large number of size categories for determining the pay of principals. As a result, principals constantly

were moving from one post to another to obtain a higher salary or to fill the position of a colleague who had been assigned to another school. By 1964 this process had resulted in so much movement of principals that the average tenure for secondary principals was slightly less than four years,[25] and nine of these 38 schools had at least three principals each during this 4-year period of time.

Such policies not only tend to reinforce tendencies toward administrative conformity by over-orienting principals toward cues from the central office, but also greatly reduce the likelihood that inner city principals will be able to work effectively with their communities and staff members. The problems of the inner city school are too varied and complex to be solved by administrators who are not thoroughly familiar with the specific situation in a given school or community or in any case are attuned as much or more to central office lists of job openings elsewhere in the system as to problems in the school.

It is not enough to say that an outstanding inner city principal will worry primarily about learning conditions in his school rather than how to get promoted to a larger school or will refuse to move even though this involves a substantial sacrifice in pay. Even the most potentially-effective administrators, after all, are only human, and it is difficult to refuse opportunities which entail more adequate salary for one's family and more prestige in the district hierarchy. Why compound dysfunctional tendencies within the hierarchy by continually placing unnecessary temptations in the path of the struggling inner city administrator? It would be better to go as far as possible in the direction of minimizing pay and status differentials between different schools, and then promote primarily according to a candidate's record in taking actions which may or may not please central office personnel but which lead to demonstrated improvements in the learning environment of the inner city school. Basing salary and promotions practices on such criteria would result in longer tenure for successful administrators while leaving plenty of room to reward excellence and initiative in the administration of inner city schools.

6. Provision of more support staff to reduce administrative "overload" on the inner city principal.

We have noted that the proliferation of many kinds of problems in the inner city school places an unusually heavy burden on the shoulders of the inner city principals. Student control problems, problems in working with teachers who become uncommonly frustrated after seemingly failing to raise pupil performance levels, the imperative need to establish close and harmonious working

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[25] Robert J. Havighurst, The Public Schools of Chicago (Chicago: Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1964), p. 234.

relationships with local parents and citizen groups, obligations to coordinate the efforts of many specialized and paraprofessional personnel added to inner city faculties through Title I or other compensatory education programs, these and other tasks which are disproportionately large or difficult in the inner city school often prevent the principal from giving adequate attention to most of them or from dealing with the most fundamental problems in his school.

Many of these tasks and problems, however, could be handled satisfactorily by additional assistant principals or administrative assistants. There is no reason, for example, why an assistant could not handle most of the job of coordinating the work of specialized and paraprofessional personnel, or why the inner city principal could not be represented by an assistant at most of the various central-office meetings which in some districts are making the principal little more than an occasional visitor to his own school. It is all very well to argue that an outstanding principal by definition is one who can handle twice as much work as the good or average administrator, but even a superman would have trouble dealing with all the problems and pressures of the inner city school. Not only are there very few supermen around who are willing to take on the often-thankless job of inner city principal, but almost certainly we would find that a higher percentage of administrators now working or currently accepting appointments in the inner city would do an outstanding job if their task was made more manageable. Just as inner city schools require more materials and resources than the "average" school if personnel who work there are to have a fair chance to provide good education for disadvantaged pupils, so, too, inner city principals need and deserve much more staff assistance than is true in the case of schools in other parts of the city.

Although the foregoing suggestions do not comprise an exhaustive enumeration of the policies that should be followed in big city school districts in order to encourage or develop the outstanding administrative leadership needed in inner city schools, they do illustrate the types of fundamental reforms toward which these districts should be moving. Inasmuch as such reforms obviously will not be easy to bring about and will be blocked by many forms of vested interests (e.g., objections from administrators and potential administrators who have spent years preparing to meet existing credentials requirements) as well as by institutional inertia, it is not at all certain that programs to improve the education of economically disadvantaged students will include policies for providing inner city schools with much more effective leadership than we have ever had on any substantial scale anywhere in American education. Success in working to give disadvantaged youngsters more truly equal educational opportunities will hinge on this crucial factor.